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## THE OLD HALL CLOCK.

By A. ASHMUN KELLY.



HE madame gave me particular orders not to move that clock; I won't do it, and I guess you'd better not, sir, either. That clock's not an every-day clock, sir, as the madame has told me time and again, and she won't allow anybody to touch it, to wind it, or anything else, lest it is Wor-

all, the clock man, who comes regular once in five years to clean the works and brush it out. So saying, the faithful old servant, ambled away, shaking his head and putting his silver-headed cane down emphatically with every step he took.

"Wonderful clock!" was my half-spoken thought when the old man had disappeared through the library door, "and I've half a mind to first look into it and then move it," which I proceeded at once to do. So I carefully opened the door, saw the long pendulum swing to and fro, ticking out the moments, the precious grains of time doled out for us in this vale of sunshine, and, alas! shadows, too, and then shut it again. I noted no difference from all other "grandfathers'" clocks that I had met with during several years' experience as a decorator. The clock's face was ornamented with sun, moon, stars and dials, indicating years, months, days, hours, minutes and seconds; seasons, settings of moon and sun, and so on—a sort of astronomical as well as horological arrangement, and in this respect was different, perhaps, from some other old hall clocks, which usually could not boast of so many accomplishments.

I must move it. I must get behind it to decorate the wall and finish out frieze and ceiling. True, by the exercise of ingenuity, patience and the expenditure of a

little more time, I might do the work; but then I had no inclination to do so, wanting to finish and be done with it as soon as possible. So I moved the mysterious old clock from its moorings, finished up behind it, and replaced it, nobody the wiser. When I had done, "the madame" came out into the hall, and I noticed how quick and nervous her glance was when directed toward that clock.

"Beg pardon, ma'am," said I, with profoundest courtesy, for you must know that Madame Spottswode was among the best of my *clientèle*. "Beg pardon, ma'am; but you will see how difficult it would be to work behind the clock, or to do the work at all." I said this in order to forestall her possible displeasure.

"I assure you, ma'am, the clock itself hardly knew it was being moved, I did it so easily."

Madame Spottswode smiled. "Holmes has been cautioning you, I perceive. He is rather more particular than I as regards this old relic and heirloom. Moving it carefully, of course, would not hurt it a particle, but I am careful that careless servants shall not disturb it. It has a somewhat romantic and interesting history, and, aside from this fact, it has been in the Spottswode family for many years. I have told its story many times to willing listeners, and, if you would like to hear it, I will tell it again."

I assured the stately old lady that nothing would so add to my pleasure, which was true, as I had a passion for antiquarian lore. So she briefly related to me the romantic story of the old hall clock, she being seated in an ancient hall chair that set off her fine old aristocratic figure like pictures one sometimes sees of "Colonial dames," while I occupied a

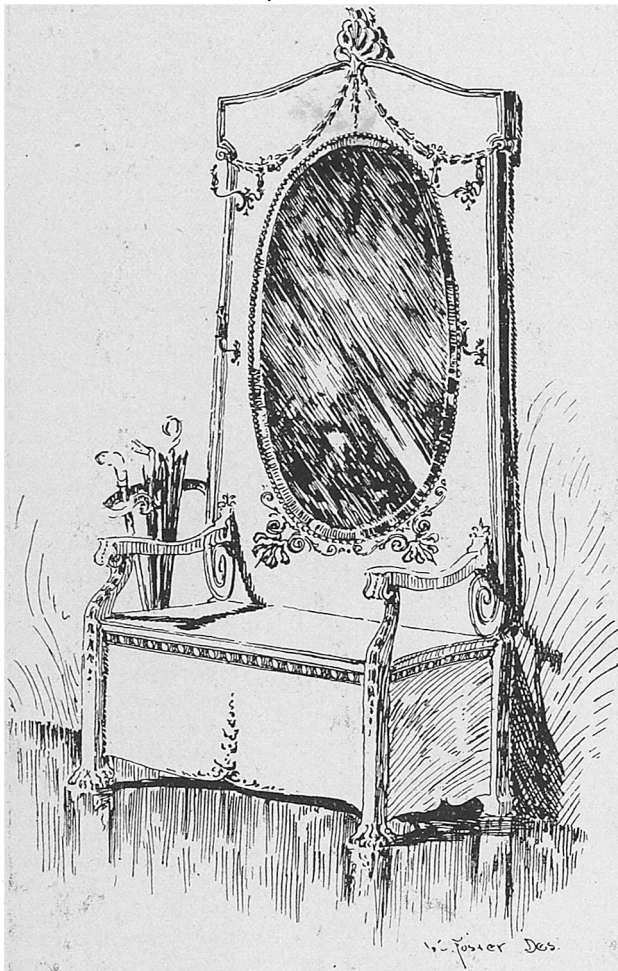


TELLING THE STORY OF THE OLD HALL CLOCK.

respectful standing posture.

"When the British army lay at Philadelphia, during the memorable winter that our little army froze and starved at Valley Forge, whose wooded crests you may see rising yonder across the great valley, the residents of this section, as indeed of all the country within a radius of fifty miles of the city, were constantly annoyed by marauding parties of red coats. My great-grandfather, Devault Beaver, lived here then. One of

his children was Margaret, a rarely beautiful young woman, who, at the time of my story, was a widow. Foragers, as I have said, were frequent visitors. One day there came to the house of my grandfather a handsome captain, at the head of a party, in search of rebels, deserters, or whatever they might fancy to lay hands upon. Captain Spottswode—for that was his name—no sooner laid eyes upon the fair widow than he fell in love with her, and, oddly and perversely enough, as Grandfather Beaver thought—for he hated the British—she fell in love with the Captain. After this the Cap-



HALL STAND. DESIGNED BY J. C. FOSTER.

tain often visited the Beaver homestead, though untended by soldiers, and in due course of time the couple were betrothed.

"One evening—a still, starry mid-autumn night it was, as an old diary in my possession tells it, Grandfather Beaver sitting in his favorite arm-chair under an old oak that stood until quite recent years at the end of the house, and Margaret and the Captain standing arm in arm by yonder wall, which overlooks the high road below—there was a far-off sound of drums heard, and every ear pricked up to catch the sound, for it did not come, as they usually did, from the Forge camps, northward yonder, but from the direction of the city, which is easterly. And Grandfather Beaver grew pale, and his wife let her knitting fall, and as for Margaret, her face was as that of the dead. Captain Spottswode caught her, or she would have fallen. He bit his lip angrily and uttered a curse.

" 'Will it follow me forever?' he gasped, huskily, as he conducted his fair companion to a seat. Then the sounds, the rolls of the drum, grew nearer and clearer, and they approached to the house, swept over the grounds, and finally faded away in the distance. Every frame but that of the Captain shuddered with dread, and all were glad to repair to the house and to light the evening candle. It was not the last time that the phantom drummer was heard, but regularly every autumn, at a certain hour of a certain evening, he could be heard beating across the lawn and on across country, always from east to west.

"Captain Spottswode deserted his army before the Royalists quit Philadelphia, and married the fair widow. Efforts were made to capture him, but he was always fortunate enough to escape. Yet he was kept a very close prisoner at the Beaver mansion, hardly daring to venture outside its walls at any time till the evacuation of the city. To while away the hours of his enforced leisure, Captain Spottswode constructed this old hall clock. He was a capital mechanic, having a genius for such work, and, having received a thorough education, being of a good and wealthy family, it is not surprising that he should be able to turn out such an admirable piece of work. It runs as faithfully to-day as it did when first from its maker's hands. It is derelict once a year, however, and that is when the anniversary of the phantom drummer occurs, for the drum has long years been silent. Regularly every fall, at a certain time, the old clock stops, and nothing can make it go again for one hour. Then it resumes its measured ticking, same as usual, without any help at starting."

"But the phantom drummer?"

"Well, it is the legend that Captain Spottswode shot a drum major in a duel in England, all about a young woman—the major's wife, I believe—and ever since, to the day of his death, the 'phantom drummer' crossed his path once a year. But the Captain was an excellent man, which I am proud to say, seeing he was my grandfather, and his children bore blameless lives. You may see his grave down at the great valley burial ground, and his beautiful Margaret's beside his, with their sons and daughters near by. Captain Spottswode was greatly respected by his neighbors, being, like them, a farmer, and he served in various official capacities, with credit to himself and good to his constituents. But I must have bored you with this poor story. Yet you may not now wonder why I think so much of that old hall clock."

I did not marvel at all. I felt like baring my head in the presence of such a relic of historic days.

#### DECORATIVE NOTES.

**T**O DECORATE a mantel-shelf for a country dance let the foundation be ferns, coarse and fine. Intersperse with vines in different tones of green. As a color bit, mass over all ox-eyed daisies, some choice nasturtium blossoms or any other flower in yellow or orange tone. In the chimney-place, if it is an open one, bank up golden rod, asparagus vine, with flowering shrubs in large jugs. Fill up every available space, and when finished it will be a superb focus for any room. Field flowers in September are in all their luxuriance for decoration.

For Fall furnishing the thicker cretonnes come into play, pretty little stripes with rosebuds, set forms and trailing vines, tints of different blues. Darker greens, dull browns and Venetian reds will this season be the prevailing hues.